

**The SABIS International Charter School  
160 Joan Street  
Springfield, MA 01129  
Board of Trustees**

**Minutes of SABIS Board of Trustees Meeting – October 21, 2020  
via conference call**

In Attendance: Sonja Shaw, John Delaney, Daryl Johnson, Luis Aponte, Atu White, Dena Fachinni, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Joyce Gondek, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Freddy Lopez, Derryl Gibbs

Guests: Maretta Thomsen, Amy Wesley, Vanessa Pileggi, Steve Bissonnette, DJ Conway, Rosara Pellicier, Ryan Gaebel Justin Baker, Lisa Townsend, Cheryl Bonavita, Laura Domasch, Shirley Vazquez, Christi Sieple-Cole, Gladys Morales, Cindy Miller, Jean Reardon, Laura D’Almeida, Ryan Meek, Kim Lizari, Lisa Elkhay, Sherrie Williams, Tim Tynan, Janet Ramos, Patricia Rios, Tara Asher

Not Present: Ellen McDonald, James Hollins

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I. Meeting called to order at 6:09 p.m.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

**Luis Aponte moved to approve the minutes of the regular meetings of 7/15 and the education committee meeting of 9/29/2020. Seconded by Patrick White and approved by voice vote, Sonja Shaw, Luis Aponte, John Delaney, Daryl Johnson, Atu White, Dena Fachinni, Patrick White, Paula Meara, Joyce Gondek, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Freddy Lopez, Derryl Gibbs.**

III. **Interim Director’s Report**

*FALL SPORTS* - Chair Sonja Shaw explained that all fall sport games have been canceled due to high COVID risk. Student safety is first priority. Ryan Gable added Springfield is in the red zone therefore Commissioner Helen Caulton recommended no competitions but practice is okay.

*REMOTE SCHOOL UPDATE* - Maretta Thomsen reported: Red color code has not impacted remote teaching. 35% of teachers are teaching in school and 65% are from home. Leadership Teams are providing support to all teachers in the use of technology and content. To date 300 remote lessons have been observed in all grades and special education.

DJ Conway noted the Student Management Team is doing an excellent job keeping in contact with families regarding attendance by making phone calls and sending emails. As of October 20, attendance rate is 98.6%. Home visits are set up for students with excessive absences. There is an appeals process set up for any student missing six classes. The attendance policy can be found in the current SABIS Student Parent Handbook on the website. Disciplinary actions are in place for unacceptable online behavior. To date there have been seven infractions: one for improper behavior, one for inappropriate behavior (which resulted in suspension), and 5 Chromebook violations (which resulted in SABIS disabling a feature on the device). Justin Baker shared SABIS in the final stages of equipping all students with Chromebooks and replacing the devices taken out of service in Spring. The last part of the Chromebook order is expected next week. Teachers have been equipped with laptops, cameras and headsets and specialized training as requested.

Amy Wesley stated student results help identify necessary adjustments. Focus has been on engagement. Regular and formal assessments were delayed due to technical difficulties and will be resumed October 26th. Once assessment results are in, remote tutoring can begin.

*ENROLLMENT UPDATE* - Maretta Thomsen reported: Current enrollment is 1562 short which is short of 1574 target. Steps to increase enrollment include an ad in the Republican newspaper stating SABIS is accepting applications in multiple languages, pop up ads on social media, a 21 day facebook marketing package, a three month ad in the Russian World purposely designed to compete with Hampden Charter, a direct mailing of postcards sent to Colonial Estates in four different languages and organizing a SICS staff member to speak with different groups of people in the City of Springfield about what the SICS has to offer. Middle school and 9th grade have the greatest student deficit.

*Staffing Update:* Ms. Thomsen reported: SABIS has interviewed numerous candidates in order to fill the one ESL teacher vacancy. ESL teachers are hard to find and must be certified. Currently certified SABIS teachers are filling in until a permanent teacher is hired. Other positions needed to fill are an IT person, a Paraprofessional, a Student Support Student Assessment person as well as an accountant.

As of today, only 5 staff members have tested positive for COVID and will not return until tested negative.

SICS parents and students have been sharing their many positive experiences daily during this stressful time.

#### IV. **Education Committee**

Anne-Marie Nicolai reported: Ms. Thomsen's team did an excellent job covering all bases In regards to Chromebooks, enrollment, staffing and assessment. Cindy Miller updated

That regulations are being met creatively with IEP students. Teachers are keeping them involved remotely. Some students are thriving in this environment. Each teacher has a liaison who keeps in constant contact with the families. Weekly IEP meetings keep everyone involved.

V. **Finance/Facilities Committee**

Freddy Lopez reported: All Trustees are encouraged to join the upcoming meeting for finances and the audit. Chair informed Committee that the audit submission has been moved to extended to November 2 due to an audit partner losing a member of his family. **A special BOT meeting will follow the Finance/Facilities meeting Wednesday, October 28th at 5pm & 6pm subsequently with the auditors.**

Tim Tynan shared Cataldo Construction from Sterling, MA will break ground in a few weeks redoing fields, building new dugouts, etc.. They came highly referred and are 7% under the approved budget.

VI. **Governance Committee**

Paula Maera reported: *Trustees* - Still awaiting from DESE approval or changes in bylaws. Trustee member's term endings - Ellen McDonald & Patrick White. With James Hollins resignation, the number of BOT members drops to 11.

*Additional Board Members* - Board is accepting applications and the Governance Committee can meet in November to review any applicants with HR, finance and education experience.

Ms. Maera suggested that resigning board members be allowed to purchase their I pads at current value allowing purchase of new I pads for oncoming members. Luis Aponte will work with Ms. Maera to determine used Ipad value. The Governance Committee will work to update Ipad agreement.

**Paula Maera motioned any leaving Board member would have the option to purchase their Ipad at current market value from this point forward so the Board can keep its I pads up to date. Seconded by Derryl Gibbs and approved by voice vote, YES: Luis Aponte, Anne-Marie Nicolai, Joyce Gondek, Atu White, Daryl Johnson, Dena Facchini, Freddy Lopez, John Delaney, Paula Maera, Derryl Gibbs, Patrick White, Sonja Shaw**

VII. **Chair's Report**

Sonja Shaw reported: *Subcommittees* - Asked all Trustees to review subcommittees and decide where they would like to serve and in what aspect. Please email decisions to Lesenia Fields and Sonja Shaw. Finance/Facilities/Technology should be listed together as one subcommittee.

*Nominations* - Please send any nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer or Secretary to Ms. Fields whether you are interested in running or would like to nominate someone by November 11th. There will be a vote on these positions at the November 18th BOT meeting. Contact Ms. Shaw or the Governance Committee with any questions regarding what the positions entail.

*Virtual Meetings (Zoom/Teams)* - Working with Zoom to figure out a feasible plan to hold virtual board meetings. Funds have already been approved. Once this is accomplished, links to meetings will then be posted on SABIS website.

Finance Committee meeting - Wednesday, October 28th at 5pm followed by a full BOT meeting at 6pm.

Anne-Marie Nicolai moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Paula Maera. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne-Marie Nicolai, Secretary  
SICS Board of Trustees